

Hertfordshire Local Resilience Forum Stakeholder Update 14 January 2022

A message from Alex Woodman, Executive Director Community Protection & Chief Fire Officer



Dear colleague,

We've had some patches of welcome bright weather this week, and there's some brighter news for our area too. The increase in the number of new cases is slowing and as a result, the impact on staffing in our essential services is starting to lessen.

There's no doubt that the 3 million doses of vaccine delivered in Hertfordshire and west Essex, and the recent drive to get us all 'boosted', has helped to reduce the impact of COVID in our communities. That doesn't mean that the risks posed by COVID have gone away – I know that there are people struggling with life-threatening cases of the virus in our hospitals this week. I would like to leave you with these three positive messages though:

- vaccinations work – they are preventing serious illness and saving lives every day
- vaccinations are available – there are thousands of [bookable](#) and [walk-in](#) opportunities available in dozens of locations in Hertfordshire this week
- by engaging with your family, friends and local networks, taking the time to listen to them and sharing reliable health and care messages, you can play a part in improving lives.

Thank you for your continued support.

COVID vaccination update

Specialist mobile vaccination unit comes to Cheshunt

The region's first, specialist mobile vaccination unit has now been positioned in Cheshunt and this week it began offering people aged over 18 the chance to get their first, second or booster jab. The brand-new facility is located in the Marks and Spencer car park at the Brookfield Centre, Halfhide Lane, Cheshunt. Up to 400 people per day can get their vaccinations at the unit, with no appointment or GP registration necessary.

The new mobile facility is aimed at reaching people in areas where there is lower vaccine uptake. Getting to vaccination centres can be a barrier for some people due to mobility issues, lack of access to transport or just being unfamiliar with the area. The mobile vaccination centre has been provided in partnership with Broxbourne Borough Council, Hertfordshire Community NHS Trust and local NHS Clinical Commissioning Groups, and was made possible with the support of Marks and Spencer and Tesco. Members of the army forces have been on hand this week to help with vaccinations.

It is hoped that more vaccination units of this sort will be offered in our area in the near future. To see the opening times for the new Cheshunt facility and all the walk-in clinics in our area, check this website: <https://covid.healthierfuture.org.uk/events/vaccination-walk-in-clinic-times>

Flu vaccination programme

There could be a significant flu season this winter, as the cold weather leads people to socialise indoors and our levels of immunity to flu are expected to be lower than normal.

Those who are eligible for a free flu vaccine are strongly encouraged to book an appointment through their GP surgery or local pharmacy. Eligible people include those with long term health conditions, all adults aged 50 years or over, health and social care workers, pregnant women and children aged up to 16. School-aged children will be offered the flu nasal spray at school and parents of 2 to 3 year-olds will receive an invitation from their GP.

Nationally and locally there has been a lower than usual uptake for flu vaccinations this year, so it is important that we encourage those most at risk to get the vaccine. Vaccines are the best protection we have against serious illness caused by flu.

More information about flu vaccination can be found at: <https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/vaccinations/flu-influenza-vaccine/>

New COVID-19 treatments

In recent weeks, the NHS has begun to offer antibody and antiviral treatments to people with COVID-19 who are at the highest risk from the virus. The treatments can help groups of patients to manage their COVID-19 symptoms at home and reduce the chances of them becoming seriously ill.

Such treatments were already being offered to patients who are admitted to hospital, but this new development means they can be safely administered as a day case, or at home, which is better for those involved and helps to reduce the strain on NHS resources. Eligible patients received a letter from the NHS in mid-December explaining who they should contact if they test positive, so that they can rapidly access the treatment they need.

In Hertfordshire, treatments are being co-ordinated by COVID-19 Medicine Delivery Units at East and North Hertfordshire NHS Trust and West Hertfordshire Hospitals NHS Trust.

This is an important milestone in helping people who are particularly at risk of being seriously ill with COVID-19 and it's encouraging that despite all of the current pressures in the health system, our clinical and operational teams in Hertfordshire have been able to set up this new service very quickly. It's possible that more patient groups will be eligible for treatments of this sort in future.